

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

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UNCLAS HALIFAX 0055

E O 11652: N/A
TAGS: EFIS SOPN CA US
SUBJECT: THE SEAL HUNT: ASSESSMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND S
ROAD SHOW
REF: 77 HALIFAX 0631

1. NFLD'S TRUTH SQUAD ON THE SEAL HUNT HAS NOW COMPLETED ITS SCHEDULE OF VISITS TO EAST COAST US AND CENTRAL CANADIAN CITIES, WITH MIXED RESULTS. ONE ST. JOHN S COLUMNIST, WELL-KNOWN LOCALLY FOR HIS UNVARYING OUTLOOK OF DOOM AND GLOOM, SEES THE PRO-SEALING ROAD SHOW AS A TRAVELLING DISASTER. IN HIS VIEW, ALL IT IS DOING IS PROVIDING A FORUM WHEREIN THE ANTI-HUNT GROUPS CAN SCORE PUBLIC OPINION POINTS FOR THEIR SIDE.

2. THIS, HOWEVER, IS AN EXTREME VIEW WHICH IS NOT SHARED BY OTHER OBSERVERS. FROM PRESS COMMENTS IN ST. JOHN S EVENING TELEGRAM AND OTHER NEWSPAPERS THROUGHOUT ATLANTIC CANADA, AND FROM TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS WITH NFLD GOVT SOURCES AND WITH QUANTUM COMMUNICATIONS,
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REPORTING OFFICER GETS IMPRESSION THAT TRUTH SQUAD DID RELATIVELY WELL WITH THE PRINT MEDIA IN THE CITIES IT VISITED AND RELATIVELY POORLY WITH LOCAL AND NETWORK TV.

3. BIGGEST SUCCESS THUS FAR WAS LEAD EDITORIAL IN NY TIMES O/A JAN 17 WHICH, WHILE IS EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS

ABOUT A HUNT WHICH IS PRIMARILY FOR FUR TO ADORN MEN AND WOMEN, STRONGLY DEFENDED THE PROCEDURES FOLLOWED BY NEWFOUNDLANDERS IN CARRYING ON THE HUNT. OTHER PRESS COMMENT THUS FAR HAS ALSO BEEN MAINLY FAVORABLE. TV COVERAGE, HOWEVER, HAS HURT THE TRUTH SQUAD S CASE, MAINLY BECAUSE NO PRO-HUNT FILM CLIPS WERE PROVIDED BY QUANTUM COMMUNICATIONS. TV PRODUCERS, THEREFORE HAVE TENDED TO USE THE GORY ANTI-HUNT CLIPS PROVIDED BY GREENPEACE FOUNDATION AND OTHER ANTI-HUNT ORGANIZATIONS. A CBS NETWORK SEQUENCE ON THE SEAL HUNT WAS PARTICULARLY DAMAGING TO THE NEWFOUNDLANDERS. IT SHOWED THE BLOODY DEATHS OF BABY HARP SEALS WHILE, ON A VOICE-OVER, PREMIER MOORES WAS HEARD IN DEFENSE OF THE HUNT.

4. NEW 60-SECOND PRO-HUNT FILM CLIP HAS BEEN PREPARED BY QUANTUM COMMUNICATIONS AND WILL BE PROVIDED TO TV STATIONS IN WEST COAST US AND EUROPEAN CITIES WHICH ARE YET TO BE VISITED BY THE NFLD GROUP.

5. UNDERSTAND PREMIER MOORES SAW SENATOR WEICKER ONLY WHILE IN WASHDC BUT IS STILL TRYING WITH HELP OF TED SORENSON TO SET UP MEETING WITH SENATOR KENNEDY. INFORMANT UNABLE ASSESS EFFECT OF TRUTH SQUAD S WASHDC VISIT ON CONGRESSIONAL OPINION VIS-A-VIS THE SEAL HUNT. MOORE

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